

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 12032 171837Z

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SUBJECT: LABOR' S ELECTION MANIFESTO

SUMMARY - THE LABOR PARTY HAS UNEQUIVOCABLY REJECTED PARTICIPATION IN ANY COALITION GOVERNMENT AND ASKED THE ELECTORATE FRO A CLEAR-CUT MANDATE TO STEER BRITAIN THROUGH THE LOOMING ECONOMIC CRISIS. SEIZING ON ONE OF THE GUT ISSUES OF THE COMING CAMPAIGN, IT MAKES MUCH OF ITS UNIQUE ABILITY TO ENLIST THE COOPERATION THE TRADE UNIONS. IT PROMISES A FINAL DECISION ON BRITISH MEMBERSHIP OF THE EC WITHIN ONE YEAR. END SUMMARY

1. IN ITS ELECTION MANIFESTO RELEASED SEPTEMBER 16, THE LABOR PARTY ASKS FOR "THE RETURN OF A LABOR GOVERNMENT WITH A WORKING MAJORITY", AND A "MANDATE FOR INDUS-
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PAGE 02 LONDON 12032 171837Z

TRIAL AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION." IT REJECTS AS "A

CRUEL FARCE" THE IDEA OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT. AT THE HEART OF ITS PROGRAM, IT PLACES THE GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL CONTRACT WITH THE TRADE UNIONS, CONTRASTING THIS VALUETARY AGREEMENT ON WAGE RESTRAINT AND A BROAD RANGE OF NATIONAL PRIORITIES WITH THE "SOCIALLY DIVISIVE POLICIES" OF THE PREVIOUS CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT AND THAT GOVERNMENT'S "DELIBERATE CONFRONTATION" WITH THE TRADE UNIONS.

2. THE MANIFESTO TICKS OFF THE PROMISES MADE IN FEBRUARY AND KEPT. "NO POSTWAR BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS ACHIEVED MORE IN SIX MONTHS." IT THEN CATALOGUES A LINGTHY SERIES OF FAMILIAR POLICIES THAT LABOR WILL IMPLEMENT IF GIVEN A MANDATE. THESE INCLUDE USE OF TAXATION TO EFFECT "A MAJOR REDISTRIBUTION OF BOTH WEALTH AND INCOME", THE NATIONALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT LAND, GREATER PUBLIC CONTROL OF NORTH SEA OIL, A SUBSTANTIAL EXTENSION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR, EDUCATIONAL REFORM, AND THE CREATION OF ELECTED ASSEMBLIES IN SCOTLAND AND WALES.

3. THE MANIFESTO PLOWS NO NEW GROUND IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DETAILS OF FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICIES REPORTED SEPTEL), BUT ON THE EC IT UNEQUIVOCABLY PLEDGES THAT WITHIN TWELVE MONTHS OF THE ELECTION THE BRITISH PEOPLE WILL BE GIVEN " THE FINAL SAY, WHICH WILL BE BINDING ON THE GOVERNMENT -- THROUGH THE BALLOT BOX-- ON WHETHER WE ACCEPT THE TERMS AND STAY IN, OR REJECT THE TERMS AND COME OUT."

4. COMMENT: THE MANIFESTO IS A FORTHRIGHT AND SELF-CONFIDENT APPEAL FOR A CLEAR-CUT MANDATE. IT SAYS IN EFFECT THAT LABOR, AND LABOR ALONE, HAS THE PROGRAM, THE EXPERIENCE, AND THE WILL TO SEE BRITAIN THROUGH THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AHEAD AND INTO THE PROMISED LAND OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, EQUALITY, AND EVENTUAL PROSPERITY. THE PROGRAM IT LAYS DOWN IS ESSENTIALLY A MODERATE ONE (THERE IS NO FURTHER SHIFT TO THE LEFT ON POLICIES), AND BY HIGHLIGHTING THE SOCIAL CONTRACT IT HAS PREEMPTED WHAT WILL BE ONE OF THE GUT ISSUES OF THE ELECTION: WHO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LONDON 12032 171837Z

CAN BEST COPE WITH THE TRADE UNIONS?

5. THE MANIFESTO'S REJECTION OF COALITION MUST BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE. RON HAYWARD, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PARTY, TOLD US LAST WEEK THAT PARTICIPATION IN A COALITION WAS LITERALLY IMPOSSIBLE ON TWO COUNTS: THE EC AND EXTENDING PUBLIC OWNERSHIP. NEITHER THE CONSERVATIVES NOR THE LIBERALS COULD ACCEPT LABOR POLICIES ON

THESE TWO ISSUES, AND ANY ATTEMPT BY THE LABOR LEADERSHIP TO RENEGE ON THESE POLICIES WOULD PROVOKE A MAJOR SPLIT WITHIN THE LABOR PARTY.

6. AS TO THE EC, WE ARE RELIABLY INFORMED THAT ROY JENKINS FIRMLY AND SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED ANY SPECIFIC MENTION OF THE WORD "REFERENDUM" IN THE MANIFESTO. JENKINS AND OTHER PRO-MARKETEERS IN THE LABOR PARTY CONTINUE TO RESIST THE IDEA OF EVER PUTTING THE QUESTION OF EC MEMBERSHIP TO THE ELECTORATE IN THE FORM OF A REFERENDUM. THE ISSUE HAS BEEN SHELVED FOR NOW IN THE INTERESTS OF FIGHTING THE ELECTION, BUT IF LABOR IS RETURNED TO POWER, A SHOWDOWN WILL BECOME VIRTUALLY UNAVOIDABLE NEXT YEAR. END COMMENT
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